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TO BE OR NOT TO BE: THE FUTURE OF NATO

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TO BE OR NOT TO BE: THE FUTURE OF NATO

SUMMARY

Shakespeare concluded that "All the world's a stage," and in the last several years, the world has seen the unfolding of the most dramatic events to occur since World War II. We have witnessed the end of the Cold War and the end of a bipolar world as the Soviet Union buckled under the strains of an overburdened and overstretched economic system shackled by an unrealistically high defense budget. We have seen the Soviets retrench back to the USSR to handle expanding internal problems and revolts, and the re-emergence of East European nationalism and factionalism. We have experienced the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of West and East Germany. We have cheered as a united Germany joined the ranks of NATO. We have seen unilateral Warsaw Pact troop cuts, and the CFE agreement which will significantly reduce force levels in Europe. Our President has led the way in the push for a New World Order, and the U.S. utilized diplomacy to garner United Nations' backing for a coalition force against Iraq following its ruthless invasion of Kuwait.

ISSUE DEFINITION

In the wake of these massive world changes, we are faced with the present growing political clout of CSCE, the future prospects of EC-92, and the possibility of a not-too-distant "Fortress Europe." As we depart the post-Cold War, post-containment years of bipolarity and establish new paradigms and new visions, we must determine the future role of NATO in the New World Order. Should NATO continue in its present form as an organization? Should the alliance structure be

transformed? Or should we disband NATO? If so, should NATO's security functions be transferred to another organization such as CSCE, WEU, or the European Community?

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Secretary Baker's Address: On December 12, 1989, U.S. Secretary of State Baker painted a vision for a transformed NATO. He indicated that while there will be many changes in Europe, that organizations serving collective purposes, such as NATO, should remain. He stated that "America's security--politically, militarily, and economically--remains linked to Europe's security." Baker indicated that the U.S. will keep significant military forces in Europe as long as our Allies desire. He stressed that the political role of NATO will be enhanced.

Further, Baker discussed four new missions for NATO. First, NATO "will become the forum where Western nations cooperate to negotiate, implement, verify, and extend agreements between East and West." In this role, NATO will implement and verify any conventional forces agreement. Second, NATO will intensify consultations and form common Western approaches to the threat of regional conflicts and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Third, NATO should work through the CSCE: "to build economic and political ties with the East; to promote respect for human rights; to help build democratic institutions; and to fashion, consistent with Western security interests, a more open environment for East-West trade and investment." Fourth, Baker concluded that NATO "may have its greatest and most lasting effect on the pattern of change by demonstrating to the nations of the East a fundamentally different approach to security. NATO's four decades

offer a vision of cooperation, not coercion; of open borders, not iron curtains."

The London Declaration: To understand official U.S. policy concerning the future of NATO, we must first understand The London Declaration, as discussed by President Bush on July 6, 1990. President Bush indicated that the North Atlantic alliance would be transformed and chart a new course for peace, stability and cooperation in Europe. The President discussed four specific proposals which establish directions for the future of NATO. First, the London Declaration "transforms our relationship with old adversaries" by inviting all member states of the Warsaw Pact to "come to NATO and establish regular diplomatic liaison with the alliance." Second, this Declaration "transforms the character of NATO's conventional defenses." NATO's current strategy of forward defense will be changed to a reduced forward presence, and multinational corps will represent collective defense. Third, NATO's nuclear strategy will be transformed. "We have agreed to modify flexible response," and if the Soviet Union reciprocates, we will "eliminate all NATO nuclear artillery shells from Europe." Fourth, this Declaration "transforms the alliance's vision for the CSCE and the structure for building a Europe whole and free." Six initiatives were agreed on to "give life to CSCE's principles and realize its potential." Another key point of this Declaration is the plan to enhance the political component of NATO while remaining a defensive alliance, since "security and stability do not lie solely in the military dimension." According to the London Declaration: "NATO will prepare a new allied military strategy moving away from 'forward

defense', where appropriate, towards a reduced forward presence and modifying 'flexible response' to reflect a reduced reliance on nuclear weapons."

U.S. Interests: To logically analyze NATO's future in terms of American national security strategy, we must first contemplate U.S. interests. NATO is a solid organization which has been in existence for more than 40 years. The United States, which has considerable influence in the Atlantic Alliance, has less influence in the CSCE, and cannot at this point expect to have much influence in the EC. At a time of so much turmoil, startling change, and friction in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and the USSR, NATO is an oasis of constancy, mutual friendship (with the exception of Greece and Turkey), and stability. The U.S. has a definite interest in continued stability in Europe and in countering any threat posed by the Soviet military, which is still the second largest military in the world. We are also interested in maintaining a stable security framework, which will ease the successful economic and political transformation of Central and East European states. The economy of the U.S. is critically linked to the economies of the West Europeans. We want to keep West European trade markets open; and we don't want to get shut out by a "Fortress Europe". Another interest is the security of the U.S., which is currently tied to the security of our NATO allies. The U.S. is also interested in the management of German power, which is why Germany is now a member of NATO.

The substantial reduction of our troops in Europe would also be advantageous economically. The U.S. has always had a heavier load in

terms of Alliance burdensharing. Even though security threats still exist, the threats have been diminished. And currently, the U.S. economy is hurting; we have our twin deficits, the present recession, and economic problems generated by the S&L scandal and Third World debt problems. The U.S. government and our citizens have an "eat, drink and be merry" philosophy highlighted by massive consumption and minimum savings. During the 1980's we were transformed from a creditor nation to the largest debtor nation in the world. U.S. citizens, who want to "have their cake and eat it too," do not want taxes raised; therefore, politicians avoid the "T" word. Because of our economic problems, it would be in the U.S. interest to downsize troops in Europe and utilize the so-called "peace dividend," which Congress raved about before the current Persian Gulf crisis, to get our economic house in order.

Threats to U.S. Interests: We are moving from a stable and predictable bipolar world to a dangerous period of instability and uncertainty. Currently, there is a possibility of European instability and security threats caused by the potential disintegration of the Soviet Union and continued turmoil in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union has one of the world's most formidable Armed Forces. And if the Soviet Union disintegrates, what will happen to its nuclear weapons? What if Gorbachev disappears and the pendulum in the USSR swings backward in time? Also, with EC-92 a closer reality, we could get shut out of Europe in an economic sense, especially if a protectionist wall is built around Western Europe and our trade markets dry up. Without NATO, would a united Germany become too strong and dominate the rest of Europe, economically if not politically? We are threatened by the loss

of U.S. influence based on a growing West European integration and a decreasing demand for U.S. military, especially nuclear, protection. Other threats include regional conflicts; terrorism; drug trafficking; pollution; environmental concerns; population control; immigration; refugee flows; wildlife protection; disease control (AIDS); and the proliferation of modern weapons technology, including missiles and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The founders of NATO were correct in their vision of a security alliance without large U.S. forces permanently stationed in Europe. NATO should maintain flexibility and work with the various organizations with a stake in Europe, especially EC-92 and CSCE, even though roles may overlap. I recommend the continuation of a transformed NATO which assumes new roles. In addition to NATO roles perceived by Secretary Baker and espoused in the London Declaration, we need NATO as a counterweight to USSR defense potential, since the Soviet military has not disappeared in the past several years of revolutionary change. NATO is needed to provide stability in the region, especially in light of the potential disintegration of the USSR and turmoil in Eastern Europe. NATO is needed in the disarmament and arms control arena to negotiate, implement and coordinate. NATO should be used as a CFE verification organization. NATO should provide a security framework for German military power. In order to have better trans-Atlantic burden sharing, we should encourage more European participation and responsibility for decisions affecting their security.

However, in addition to its traditional roles, NATO should consider expansion of roles to counter other threats to NATO countries, including regional conflicts and boundary disputes (not just within NATO country borders); economic concerns; terrorism; drug trafficking; pollution; environmental concerns; population control; immigration; refugee flows; wildlife protection; disease control (AIDS); and the proliferation of modern weapons technology, including missiles and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Strengths of Recommendations: An organization in existence, functioning well, and maintaining Western European peace for over 40 years, NATO is a model of stability which can help maintain stability in the region. Trying to replace a workable institution such as NATO or disestablishing such a strong alliance will be quite risky and a destabilizing influence. Within the Alliance, the U.S. can retain influence and ties to Europe which will guard against "Fortress Europe." Also, NATO is an insurance policy guarding against the current and potential Soviet military threat. It also is an assurance to all Europeans concerning the united German state. During this transition period, NATO can help Germany gain and maintain harmonious relations with its neighboring states. NATO is needed to keep East European ethnic, religious, economic, and national tensions in check. The Alliance can help to counterbalance European border disputes. Also, in assuming new roles, NATO can work in a complementary, not contradictory, fashion with the United Nations. As an Alliance, NATO can have more influence in the United Nations. In carving a New World Order, a transformed NATO is essential to peace and stability.

Weaknesses of Recommendations: Many feel that NATO has served its purpose as an organization. We won the Cold War and the U.S. remains as a unipolar world power, the leader of the world, not just the leader of the free world. It appears that Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are switching to market economies. Many Eastern European nations are experimenting with democracies. With the CFE drawdowns, Germany's reunification and close ties with Western Europe, and organizations gaining in momentum such as EC-92 and CSCE, critics feel the 16-nation Alliance structure has served its purpose and should retire gracefully and transfer European security arrangements to CSCE, WEU, or EC-92.

Some believe that WEU may eventually make NATO irrelevant and give Europeans more control over their own security arrangements. This is viewed very positively by the group of Europeans who view the United States as an autonomous actor which will leave Europe when the U.S. desires. Additionally, WEU has the advantage of being able to operate out-of-area, which is not within the scope of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Critics conclude that instead of inventing new NATO roles, the disestablishment of NATO and closer U.S. cooperation with the United Nations will ensure a peaceful transition to the New World Order. The U.S. can bring home the troops, make significant cuts in military manpower, weapons systems, and budgets, and use the peace dividend to reduce the deficit and improve our economy. According to this point of view: "To every thing there is a season"--NATO was born in the post-World War II years of Soviet containment, and should be disestablished in the post-Cold War years of the 1990s.

